

REMARKS:

Claim 48 is cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 1-5 and 7-47 are currently pending in the application.

By this Amendment, claims 1, 5, and 33 have been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention. Applicant expressly reserves the right to pursue broader claims in this or another application.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7-11, 13-16, 18, 19, 21-25, 27-30, 32-34, 36-40, 42-45, and 47 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Shekhar Iyer, et al., "Automated retrieval and ranking of similar parts in agile manufacturing," IIE Transactions 29 859-876 (1997) ("Iyer article"). Claims 2, 4, 12, 17, 20, 26, 31, 35, 41, and 46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the Iyer article.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b):

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7-11, 13-16, 18, 19, 21-25, 27-30, 32-34, 36-40, 42-45, and 47 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over the Iyer article. However, since the Iyer article fails to disclose all of the limitations of these claims as amended, the Iyer article cannot anticipate these claims.

A claim is anticipated by a prior art reference only if the reference discloses or inherently describes every detail of the claim. According to the MPEP, "[a] claim is anticipated only if *each and every element* as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference."¹ Also according to the MPEP, "[T]he identical invention must be shown in as *complete detail* as is contained in the ... claim."²

¹ MPEP 2131, citing *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987), emphasis added.

² MPEP 2131, citing *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989), emphasis added.

For example, claim 1 recites “determine[ing] a product similarity value for the potential alternative product according to the attribute similarity values.” By this Amendment, claim 1 has been amended to clarify that “each attribute similarity value is calculated according to either a first expression or a second expression depending on whether the attribute value for the potential alternative product is less than or greater than the desired attribute value for the requested product.”

The Iyer article fails to disclose these limitations. The Iyer article discloses determining the degree of similarity between different parts in sections 4.1 and 4.2. However, the Iyer article fails to disclose calculating similarity values using one of two different expressions based on whether an attribute value for a potential alternative product is less than or greater than the desired attribute value of the requested product. Thus, the Iyer article cannot anticipate or render obvious claim 1 or claims 2-4 and 7-18 depending from claim 1.

With respect to independent claims 5 and 33, each of these claims includes limitations similar to those discussed above in connection with claim 1. Thus, the arguments presented above in connection with claim 1 apply equally to claims 5 and 33, as well as their dependent claims.

Further with regard to claims 12, 26, and 41, it is respectfully submitted that these claims set forth allowable subject matter. As pointed out in the Office Action, “the particular claimed algorithm is not mentioned” in the Iyer article.³ Since a claim is anticipated by a prior art reference only if the reference discloses or inherently describes every detail of the claim, clearly the Iyer article cannot anticipate claims 12, 26, and 41.

For the reasons set forth herein, the Applicants submit that claims 1, 3, 5, 7-11, 13-16, 18, 19, 21-25, 27-30, 32-34, 36-40, 42-45, and 47 are not anticipated by the Iyer article. The Applicant further submits that claims 1, 3, 5, 7-11, 13-16, 18, 19, 21-25, 27-30, 32-34, 36-40, 42-45, and 47 are in condition for allowance. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1, 3, 5, 7-11, 13-16, 18, 19, 21-25, 27-30,

³ Office Action, p. 8, para. C.

32-34, 36-40, 42-45, and 47 be reconsidered and that claims 1, 3, 5, 7-11, 13-16, 18, 19, 21-25, 27-30, 32-34, 36-40, 42-45, and 47 be allowed.

THE LEGAL STANDARD FOR ANTICIPATION REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102:

The following sets forth the legal standards for "anticipation."

The events that can lead to anticipation can be divided into the following seven categories, all defined by statute:

1. Prior Knowledge: The invention was publicly known in the United States before the patentee invented it.
2. Prior Use: The invention was publicly used in the United States either (i) before the patentee invented it; or (ii) more than one year before he filed his patent application.
3. Prior Publication: The invention was described in a printed publication anywhere in the world either (i) before the patentee invented it; or (ii) more than one year before he filed his patent application.
4. Prior Patent: The invention was patented in another patent anywhere in the world either (i) before the patentee invented it; or (ii) more than one year before he filed his application.
5. On Sale: The invention was on sale in the United States more than one year before the patentee filed his application.
6. Prior Invention: The invention was invented by another person in the United States before the patentee invented it, and that other person did not abandon, suppress or conceal the invention.
7. Prior U.S. Patent: The invention was described in a patent granted on a patent application filed in the United States before the patentee made the invention.

Each of those seven events has its own particular requirements, but they all have the following requirements in common:

1. Anticipation must be shown by clear and convincing evidence.
2. If one prior art reference completely embodies the same process or product as any claim, the product or process of that claim is anticipated by the prior art, and that claim is invalid. To decide whether anticipation exists, one must consider each of the elements recited in the claim and determine whether all of them are found in the particular item alleged to be anticipating prior art.
3. There is no anticipation unless every one of those elements is found in a *single* prior publication, prior public use, prior invention, prior patent, prior knowledge or prior sale. One may not combine two or more items of prior art to make out an anticipation. One should, however, take into consideration, not only what is expressly disclosed or embodied in the particular item of prior art, but also what inherently occurred in its practice.
4. There cannot be an accidental or unrecognized anticipation. A prior duplication of the claimed invention that was accidental, or unrecognized, unappreciated, and incidental to some other purpose is not an invalidating anticipation.

Those four requirements must be kept in mind and applied to each kind of anticipation in issue. The following additional requirements apply to some categories of anticipation.

1. Prior Knowledge: An invention is anticipated if it was known by others in the United States before it was invented by the patentee. "Known," in this context, means known to the public. Private knowledge, secret knowledge or knowledge confined to a small, limited group is not necessarily an invalidating anticipation. Things that were known to the public only outside the United States are not invalidating anticipation.

2. Prior Use: An invention is anticipated if it was used by others before it was invented by the patentee, or more than one year before the patentee filed his patent application. "Use," in this context, means a public use.

3. Prior Publication: A patent is invalid if the invention defined by the claims was described in a printed publication before it was invented by the patentee or more than one year prior to the filing date of his application. For a publication to constitute an anticipation of an invention, it must be capable, when taken in conjunction with the knowledge of people of ordinary skill in the art, of placing the invention in the possession of the reader. The disclosure must be enabling and meaningful. In determining whether the disclosure is complete, enabling, and meaningful, one should take into account what would have been within the knowledge of a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time, and one may consider other publications that shed light on the knowledge such a person would have had.

4. Prior Patent: If the invention defined by the claims was patented in the United States or a foreign country, either before it was invented by the inventor or more than one year before the inventor filed his patent application, then the invention was anticipated. The effective date for this type of anticipation is the date on which two things co-existed: (i) the owner of the referenced patent had the right to enforce that patent; and (ii) the reference patent was available to the public. What was "patented" in the reference patent is determined by what is defined by its claims, interpreted in the light of the general description.

5. On Sale: A patent is invalid if the invention claimed in it was on sale in the United States more than one year prior to the application filing date.

6. Prior Invention: If the invention defined by the claims was invented by another person, in the United States, before it was invented by the inventor, and that other person did not abandon, suppress, or conceal the invention, the invention lacks novelty. A prior invention, even if put in physical form and shown to produce the desired result, is not an invalidating anticipation unless some steps were taken to make it public. However, it is not necessary that the inventor had knowledge of that prior invention.

7. Prior U.S. Application: A patent is invalid for lack of novelty if the invention defined by the claims was described in a United States patent issued on a patent application filed by another person before the invention was made by the inventor. The effective date of a prior application for purposes of this issue is the date on which it was filed in the United States. Foreign-filed patent applications do not apply. If the issued United States patent claims the benefit of more than one United States application, its effective date as an anticipation is the filing date of the first United States application that discloses the invention claimed in that referenced patent.

Experimental Use Exception: The law recognizes that it is beneficial to permit the inventor the time and opportunity to develop his invention. As such there is an "experimental use" exception to the "public use" and "on sale" rules. Even though the invention was publicly used or on sale, more than one year prior to the application filing date, that does not invalidate the patent, provided the principal purpose was experimentation rather than commercial benefit. If the primary purpose was experimental, it does not matter that the public used the invention or that the inventor incidentally derived profit from it.

When a public use or sale is shown, the burden is on the inventor to come forward with evidence to support the experimental use exception. Only experimentation by or under the control of the inventor qualifies for this exception. Experimentation by a third party, for its own purposes, does not qualify for this exception. Once the invention leaves the inventor's control, its use is a public one, even if further experimentation takes place.

The experimentation must relate to the claimed features of the invention. And it must be for the purpose of technological improvement, not commercial exploitation. If any commercial exploitation does occur, it must be merely incidental to the primary purpose of experimentation. A test done primarily for marketing, and only incidentally for technological improvement, is a public use.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Claims 2, 4, 12, 17, 20, 26, 31, 35, 41, and 46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the Iyer article. However, because the Iyer article fails to disclose or suggest all of the limitations of claims 2, 4, 12, 17, 20, 26, 31, 35, 41, and 46, the Iyer article cannot render these claims obvious.

Claims 2, 4, 12, and 17 depend from independent claim 1, claims 20, 26, and 31 depend from independent claim 5, and claims 35, 41, and 46 depend from independent claim 33. Since each of independent claims 1, 5, and 33 is considered to be in condition for allowance as discussed above, claims 2, 4, 12, 17, 20, 26, 31, 35, 41, and 46 are considered to be in condition for allowance by virtue of the fact that they depend from an allowable claim.

For the reasons set forth herein, the Applicant submits that claims 2, 4, 12, 17, 20, 26, 31, 35, 41, and 46 are not rendered obvious by the Iyer article. The Applicant further submits that claims 2, 4, 12, 17, 20, 26, 31, 35, 41, and 46 are in condition for allowance. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 2, 4, 12, 17, 20, 26, 31, 35, 41, and 46 be reconsidered and that claims 2, 4, 12, 17, 20, 26, 31, 35, 41, and 46 be allowed.

THE LEGAL STANDARD FOR OBVIOUSNESS REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103:

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, and not based on applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 U.S.P.Q.2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991); M.P.E.P. § 2142. Moreover, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 U.S.P.Q.

580 (CCPA 1974). If an independent claim is nonobvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious. *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 U.S.P.Q.2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988); M.P.E.P. § 2143.03.

With respect to alleged obviousness, there must be something in the prior art as a whole to suggest the desirability, and thus the obviousness, of making the combination. *Panduit Corp. v. Dennison Mfg. Co.*, 810 F.2d 1561 (Fed. Cir. 1986). In fact, the absence of a suggestion to combine is dispositive in an obviousness determination. *Gambro Lundia AB v. Baxter Healthcare Corp.*, 110 F.3d 1573 (Fed. Cir. 1997). The mere fact that the prior art can be combined or modified does not make the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination. *In re Mills*, 916 F.2d 680, 16 U.S.P.Q.2d 1430 (Fed. Cir. 1990); M.P.E.P. § 2143.01. The consistent criterion for determining obviousness is whether the prior art would have suggested to one of ordinary skill in the art that the process should be carried out and would have a reasonable likelihood of success, viewed in the light of the prior art. Both the suggestion and the expectation of success must be founded in the prior art, not in the Applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 U.S.P.Q.2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991); *In re O'Farrell*, 853 F.2d 894 (Fed. Cir. 1988); M.P.E.P. § 2142.

A recent Federal Circuit case makes it clear that, in an obviousness situation, the prior art must disclose each and every element of the claimed invention, and that any motivation to combine or modify the prior art must be based upon a suggestion in the prior art. *In re Lee*, 61 U.S.P.Q.2d 1430 (Fed. Cir. 2002). Conclusory statements regarding common knowledge and common sense are insufficient to support a finding of obviousness. *Id.* at 1434-35.


CONCLUSION:

Enclosed herewith is a Request for Continued Examination, which includes an authorization to charge the \$790.00 fee for an RCE to **Deposit Account No. 500777**. If an extension of time is necessary for allowing the Amendment to be timely filed, this document is to be construed as also constituting a Petition for Extension of Time Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) to the extent necessary. Any fee required for such Petition for Extension of Time should be charged to **Deposit Account No. 500777**.

Please link this application to Customer No. 53184 so that its status may be checked via the PAIR System.

Respectfully submitted,

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